



9-1-2009

***Mudbound* by Hillary Jordan, Algonquin Books, 2009**

Judi Morrel

Butler University, jmorrel@butler.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews

Recommended Citation

Morrel, Judi, "*Mudbound* by Hillary Jordan, Algonquin Books, 2009" (2009). *LAS Faculty Book Reviews*. 148.

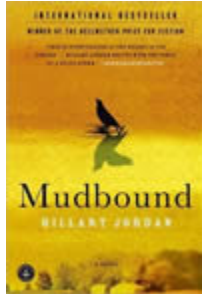
https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews/148

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in LAS Faculty Book Reviews by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@butler.edu.

Because Ideas Matter...

The faculty and staff of Butler University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences presents

Recommended Readings



Mudbound

by Hillary Jordan, Algonquin Books, 2009

Reviewed by Judith Morrel

Mudbound, Hillary Jordan's debut novel published in 2008, won the Bellwether Prize for fiction, a prize awarded biennially to a first novel addressing issues of social change. Just after the World War II, Henry McAllan uproots his wife Laura and two young daughters from their home in Memphis and moves them to a forlorn, unforgiving cotton farm in the Mississippi Delta. Like many Mississippians, Henry is bound in his very soul to the land, mud and all; Laura, city born and bred, is not; but in 1946, she does what is expected of a wife and struggles to raise her family and support Henry in a two-room shack with no running water and no electricity and with her racist father-in-law living in a lean-to in the muddy yard. The story of hardship, racial hatred, injustice and yes, some compassion, is told in the voices of the main characters: Laura; Henry; Florence, a black midwife who works as a domestic for Laura and Henry and whose husband is a share cropper on Henry's farm; Jamie, Henry's handsome war hero brother; and Ronsel, Florence's son, also a returning war hero. Jamie and Ronsel, both suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, form an unlikely friendship fueled by alcohol, which sets in motion the novel's journey to a shocking conclusion. *Mudbound*, while heart-wrenching to read, is an unforgettable and unforgiving portrait of two families who seem trapped by their time, their place, and their race.

- Judith Morrel is associate professor of Mathematics at Butler University.